WAR-WORN YOUNGSTERS GIVEN NEW LIFE START

Children "From Where the War Is" Find Heaven Awaiting Them in French Barracks Conducted by American Red Cross

The children of France — nothing is too good for them!

So many an American soldier has thought when they have lightened up his weary march with their shrilly piped-up *Vivent les Américains*, or their more newly-acquired "How doo you doo?" The spectacle of sentries walking their posts with little toddlers grasping their coats and keeping step with them is nothing new. In fact, one of the most heartening and cheering things about this whole business of war making is the infinite capacity for mutual friendship that exists between the children of France and the soldiers of America. Many a man has gone without his chocolate and gum from home in order that the tots in his billet might not be disappointed; and many another man has gone well into what was left of his half of a month's pay in order that little Jean Ba'tiste or petite Marie might learn to play Uncle Sam's bugle calls on a real live harmonica.

The individual soldier, however, can do but little for the kids of France who warm his heart by reminding him of the kids—perhaps his own—back home. It remains, therefore, for some organization that is perhaps a little more impersonal but none the less earnestly warm-hearted to do good turns for the children of France in a body. And that organization, naturally enough, happens to be the American Red Cross.

Already, in the midst of war, at a spot shaken at times by the vibrations of the big guns and not unaccustomed to the whir of both Boche and friendly planes in the sky overhead, the American Red Cross has set about doing its great work for the little tots of France.

Peace Bureau In Barracks

Symbolically enough, its children's hospital, situated in a city of eastern France, is housed in what were once soldiers' barracks—the work of peace, or perhaps better, of preparation for peace, being carried on and what were the housings of preparations for war. Without beating any necessary swords into ploughshares or equally essential spears into pruning-hooks, the Red Cross set about its work quietly, efficiently. As soon as it moved in it began gathering to itself, into the motherly arms of its workers, the children from all about the devastated countryside to the north and, having gathered them, began at once to care for them.

And what a plight those youngsters were in when first they came to the hospital! For three years they had rather existed than lived, under shell fire by day and bomb fire by night; sleeping in dug-outs, in cellars, under the rent roofs of abandoned farms. Their little bodies were wracked by shell shock in many cases. Their clothes—what clothes they had—were swarming with vermin that they had picked up in the hovels they were forced to resort to. At that tender age they had been forced to live like little animals, by forage and scavenging, and their cheeks were wan, their wrists thin, their tiny legs puny as clay pipe stems. It is needless to say that many of them—perhaps *most*—were orphans, with fathers killed at the front or mothers felled by random shells as they worked about their farms at home.

Blessed Rest At Last

Dirty, disease-scabbed, drawn in face, emaciated, they come trooping in to the hospital. In some cases their mothers, also in need of hospital care, came with them. In more cases the children were rounded up by strangers and brought into the renovated barracks, all shiny and new from much scrubbing and whitewashing. A few baths, a few hot meals, intelligent treatment of their skin ailments, clean, dry, fresh clothes and long, refreshing sleeps and the children began to appear at home in their Spotless Town surroundings.

Right here a word should be said about the new home in which the children find themselves upon awaking from what is for many of them their first really refreshing sleep since the war started.

When the Red Cross people first took over the barracks they found them minus of all the modern conveniences indispensable to efficient hospital management and nursing. Built of stone, they hoarded chills for the sensitive, and there was no way to heat them save by keeping a soft coal stove going in every room. There was—and is *yet—no* running water, and bath water had to be heated upon the tops of the stoves. It has to be warmed in that primitive fashion even yet — heated, and heated constantly, for regular, persistent bathing in warm water is the foundation treatment for all the illnesses which the uncared-for children are particularly likely to have.

"Friends In Need"

In addition, the barracks, when they were first taken over, were filthy. That meant much work for the French territorial troops who were assigned the job of cleaning up the barracks. It meant more work for the group of American Quakers who followed them. In time, and by dint of much whitewash, soapsuds, disinfectants and elbow grease, the place was made habitable. The floors were covered with linoleum, little trundle beds were set up, and the laboratory and operating equipment installed. But it was a long, hard job to make the quarters such that reborn children ought to have; and, because of the arrangement for heat and water, it is a long hard job to keep the quarters up to inspection appearance.

The children have responded with brightened faces to the cheery atmosphere of the new surroundings. They are picking up in weight and heightening in color. Those that are well enough to be up and about spend part of the day in the primary school, which is run in conjunction with the hospital. The rest, carefully and warmly bundled up, are given all the fresh air and sunshine that the weather will allow. The sunshine idea of caring, invented by God but neglected by man these many centuries, is beginning to come into its own again, and nowhere are its beneficent results more apparent that in this refuge for war-ousted, war-orphaned children.

Songs While Cannon Roar

During the play hour all the well ones at school are kept out of doors, walking through their quaint games, all carried on in a circle, more like an old-fashioned country dance than the rollicking pastimes our own youngsters know. They do not shout and scream and leap about, these war-rescued mites, but they do sing—sing to the accompaniment of the muffled boom, boom, boom of the bombardment borne from over the hills—yonder, "where the war is."

When ragged, dirty, uncared-for little ones have, by dint of hot water and good food and warm beds and clothes and intelligent medical treatment, been brought to the point where they will sing, and sing of their own accord, surely much has been done to make them happy.

300 RED TRIANGLES HUNG OUT IN FRANCE

Fifteen Hundred Y.M.C.A. Workers in A.E.F. Include 200 Women

Counting tents, cafés, hotels, cellars, rooms in what is left of houses out near the front, double huts, single huts, lofts, a corner in a convent, a Hotel de Ville—in short list every place where the American Army and Navy Y.M.C.A. has hung out its red triangle in France, and the number will be something more than 300.

Work is done in at least 95 per cent of the places where American soldiers or sailors are stationed, and it will not be long before the few isolated units will be offered Red Triangle facilities. At least, that is the plan and the hope of the organization.

Counting women, old men, young men, middle-aged men, preachers, teachers, regular Y.M.C.A. secretaries, business men, writers, farmers, lawyers, advertising men, druggists, an undertaker and persons from a miscellaneous scattering of professions, vocations and avocations, there are some 1,500 Y.M.C.A. workers in France. Of this number about 200 are women.

The Y.M. is also operating in England, Scotland and Ireland for the comfort and convenience of American soldiers en route and of sailors in port. There are some 50 centers in the British Isles.

"*Le Triangle Rouge*"—as the Frenchmen call it when they don't say "Egreck 'Em Say Ah"—is also at work for Americans on the rock of Gibraltar.

GOOD OLD EVERYBODY

There were three of them, rolling down the street, arm in arm.

"Good old Aussie!" exclaimed the American. "When the war's over I'm going to Aussie to live, so I am!"

"Good old States!" shouted the Canadian. "When the war's over I'm going across the line to live!"

"Good old Canada!" chimed in the Australian. "When the war's over I'm going to stop off there and live, and save half of my fare home."

RAILROADS READY IF TIE-UPS OCCUR

American System in France Has Mastered Problem of Distribution

EQUIPPED FOR EMERGENCY

Deranged Schedules and Clogged Tracks Only Slight Handicap in Moving Supplies

Railroading, after all, may be called the typical American game—that is, the typical game of peace times. It calls for hardihood, cool-headedness, farsightedness; for all the good qualities which we like to think are our own more than any others. Without railroading we should never have conquered the North American continent; so, it is nothing to wonder at that we should turn first of all to railroading when it comes about that we have the job of conquering Germany.

We have our own railroad system here in France. From the Expedition distributing station, which is a big railroad clearing house for men and supplies, lines run back to the ports of entry, forward to the fighting zone. The distributing station, which has been in operation for some time now, controls the movement of traffic over all the American lines, and from it are taken the supplies needed for the army in the field, to be redistributed at the various divisional ammunition, food, and forage bases. In like manner the troop trains arrive and are distributed.

It is not overstating to say that "as goes the distributing station, so goes the army." That is, if it falls down on its job, the army, for lack of reinforcements, or munitions or food, will very likely fall down on its job. But, from the system which has been worked out by the authorities in charge of the central station, and the care with which every movement of troops "up front" is followed up, such a catastrophe is, for all purposes of this world, beyond the range of possibility.

Map Shows What's What

On the walls of the office of the lieutenant-colonel, Q.M.C., now in command of the station, is a map dotted with glass-headed pins, of various colors, indicating the general plan of distribution. The pins with the light blue heads are to represent towns where American troops are billeted, or portions of the line held by American troops, while the dark blue ones stand for divisional disbursing stations, at which trucks and trains can dump their supplies. The officer in charge can therefore tell by a glance at the map the exact disposition of the A.E.F. in France on that day, and give his orders accordingly.

In case, however, that breakdowns occur, that schedules are deranged, that the American road from a certain port to the distribution station is clogged with troop trains when it is desired to send supplies through to other troops, the Q.M.C. is none the less prepared. At the distribution station are huge warehouses filled with emergency supplies, which can be quickly loaded on to trains and shot out from the station toward the front. In case the lines leading from the distribution station to the front are clogged, the quartermaster corps is ready to meet the emergency again, for at all the advanced railheads are other warehouses, stored with rations sufficient to keep the troops in their vicinity supplied for two days.

Real Railroad Center

This dsitribution station has clustered about it a number of railroad and other shops, including a salvage plant for the repair of rolling stock. Here are to be found the Q.M.C. shoemakers, the wheelwrights, the harness makers, and, above all, the Q.M.C. laundry plant. Pending the building of sheds to house these shops, the authorities have had to use all the vacant buildings they could rent in a neighboring city, while supplies at one time had to be stacked on the ground, protected from the rain and snow by tarpaulins. When all the buildings are up, however, Uncle Sam, in addition to his big railroad repair shop and clearing house, will have established at a certain spot in France quite some department store for the use of the likes of us.

GET YOUR TAG—TIME'S UP

What's your number?

If you can't answer this question, you had better get busy.

Yesterday was the last day upon which you should have been given an official numerical designation which will be yours, and yours only, until the war is over. If you haven't received it, you had better see the top sergeant. If he can't fix you up, see the C.O., and if he doesn't know, go right on up until you do get it.

Every soldier now in the service of Uncle Sam is supposed today to have a number which is as much a part of him in the Army as his Christian name. It is to be used on payrolls and muster rolls opposite his name and on other documents where his name is written.

The new numbers begin at one and will run up as high as is necessary to include all the American soldiers necessary to lick the Kaiser.

If you haven't got your number, GET BUSY.

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